

REMARKS

Before this amendment, claims 1-52 were pending in the application. The Office action allowed claims 9-17. The Office Action objected to claims 1-8, 33, and 34. Finally, the Office Action rejected claims 1-8 and 18-52 either as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,552,938 to Anand et al. ("Anand") or as obvious over the combination of either Anand or a reference submitted by the Applicant, and one or more additional references.

At the outset, the Applicant thanks the Examiner for the allowance of claims 9-17. The Office Action objected to the user of the phrase "adapted to" in claim 1. Although the Applicant respectfully disagrees, in the interest of obtaining a patent as efficiently as possible, the Applicant with this paper amends claim 1 to remove that phrase without prejudice. With respect to the objection to claims 34-38, the Applicant cancels without prejudice claim 34, and amends claim 35. The Applicant submits that the amendments overcome the objection.

Turning to the substantive rejections, although the Applicant respectfully disagrees with the rejections of the claims, the Applicant with this paper cancels claim 43 and amends claims 1, 18, 30, and 41, without prejudice. By making the amendments, the Applicant seeks to facilitate compact prosecution and to expedite the issuance of a patent, and to more particularly point out and distinctively claim the inventive subject matter. The Applicant respectfully submits that the references of record, either singly or in combination, fail to anticipate or render obvious the amended independent claims and, hence, also the dependent claims.

For at least the grounds articulated in this paper, the Applicant respectfully submits that the presently pending claims are allowable. The Applicant therefore respectfully requests a prompt Notice of Allowance.

CONCLUSION

In view of the remarks above, the Applicant respectfully submits that the claims are in allowable condition. Consequently, favorable reconsideration and prompt issuance of a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested. If any fees other than the fee for the extension of time are due for any of the enclosed materials, please deduct such fees from (or credit any overpayment to) deposit account number 50-3813/ALTR-023.

The examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the phone number indicated below with any questions or comments, or to otherwise facilitate expeditious and compact prosecution of the application.

Respectfully submitted,



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